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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0236
INFO ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0010
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0012
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

UNCLAS MUSCAT 000191

SIPDIS
STATE FOR NEA/ARP
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OIIP KPAQ KMDR MU

SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION

¶1. SUMMARY: In Omani dailies this week, private daily "Al Watan" stated that Palestinian reconciliation is now a necessity, and factions must take advantage of the Cairo talks. State daily "Oman" backed the Sudanese President, calling the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant a violation of international law. "Oman" noted the talks between the U.S. and Syria, saying that now the U.S. 'understands Syria's importance'. END SUMMARY.

"Reconciliation is Not a Luxury"

¶2. On March 10, private Arabic daily "Al Watan" (circulation 42,000) commented that reconciliation between Palestinian faction is a requirement. According to "Reconciliation is a Basic Need for the Palestinians":

"Politicians can no longer ignore the Palestinian tragedy at the hands of the Israeli occupation. The current situation is an opportunity for Palestinian factions to reconcile through the national dialogue started in Cairo. Reconciliation is not a luxury or dream, but rather a requirement. Palestinians must take full advantage of the opportunity given."

"False Political Pretenses"

¶3. On March 11, government Arabic daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) condemned the International Criminal Court for the arrest warrant against Sudanese President al Bashir. According to "Muscat Declaration Sets the Record Straight":

"The Muscat Declaration [from the Arab Parliamentary Union meet in Muscat] emphasized three issues. First, it stressed the importance of national security of individual Arab states. Second, the Declaration called for an end to Arab political differences so that we can join efforts to achieve our common interests. Third, it said that the ICC arrest warrant against President Omar al Bashir was issued on false political pretenses, violating international laws. The Muscat meet demonstrated a clear rejection of the decision to issue this arrest warrant. This refusal supports Sudanese and Arab efforts to address the Darfur crisis and to restore stability in Sudan. International organizations must reject this warrant in order to advance peace and development in Sudan."

"The Need to Communicate with Damascus"

¶4. Government daily "Oman" on March 12 noted U.S. talks with Syria as a factor that will lead the Arab world into a new, peaceful phase. According to "Arab and International Moves in Syria's Direction":

"The situation in the Arab world is about to enter a new phase. The Syrian President has stated his position on peace with Israel. Turkey is willing to continue indirect negotiations between Syria and Israel, and the U.S. wants to push forward the peace process. All parties are for true peace in the region. The U.S. understands Syria's importance in the peace process, shown by its recent contact with Syria. The U.S. recognizes the need to communicate with Damascus in order to understand Syria's views on Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq."

HURTADO